

Knee Arthroscopy

Your doctor has prescribed arthroscopy (arth-ro-scop-y) for your knee problem. This handout will tell you what you can expect before and after the arthroscopy.

Arthroscopy is a type of operation that lets your doctor see inside your knee and make needed repairs. It is done using either a local anesthetic at the site, a regional anesthetic that numbs the knee, or a general anesthetic that puts you to sleep. Knee arthroscopy can take up to one hour.

Before Surgery

You will have a preoperative clinic appointment. During this appointment you:

- Will be able to ask the surgeon any questions you have about your operation
- And your surgeon will sign a surgical permit after discussing your case
- Will be told if you should stop taking any of your medications before the day of surgery
- Will be given a special scrub pad to use the night before surgery
- Will probably be told what time and where to report for your arthroscopy. If this information is not available the day of your clinic appointment, the doctor or nurse coordinator will call you with the time and place the day before the operation. This information is not available from the Surgery Department, Admissions, or Outpatient Surgery so **do not call them**.

If you have crutches, bring them to the appointment with you. If you do not have crutches, you will be given some. You will be sent to Physical Therapy where your crutches will be adjusted and you will be shown how to use them.

You must arrange for someone to drive you home after your arthroscopy. Do this **before** you report for your operation. The medicine you receive during the arthroscopy can make you sleepy so it will not be safe for you to drive. If you must stay in the hospital overnight, your doctor, the nurse coordinator, or Outpatient Surgery will make the arrangements.

The Night Before Surgery

Scrub the knee to be operated on for 10 minutes using the special soap pad you received during your preoperative appointment. Scrub 6 inches above, below, and around the knee. When you finish, wash the area well with soap and water. Be

sure you rinse off all of the scrubbing soap. Do not shave or cut any hair in this area. This will be done in the surgical holding area, if needed.

Do not eat or drink anything (not even water), after midnight, the night before your arthroscopy. Doing so could result in the delay or cancellation of your operation. If you were told to take any medications the morning of your arthroscopy, you may take them with a small sip of water. This is the only exception.

The Day of Surgery

Leave valuables at home. Wear loose fitting clothing. **Bring your crutches.**

Report to Outpatient Surgery, on the second floor, at the time you were given during your preoperative appointment or in the phone call from the doctor or nurse coordinator. Do not report at the time stated by the automated phone call, the time on the appointment letter, or the time given to you by the Scheduling Department.

You will change into a gown and be taken to the holding area. There you will talk to a doctor from the Anesthesia Department. An IV will be started. An IV is a small plastic tube placed directly into a vein. It is used to give you fluids and medication during the operation.

You will be taken into the operating room and placed on a special table for arthroscopy. The room will feel cool and the lights will be bright.

After Surgery

You will be taken to the Recovery Room where you will stay for at least 1 hour. Then you will go back to Outpatient Surgery. A nurse will watch you closely and check your blood pressure, pulse, temperature, and dressing. You will be asked to move the knee that was operated on to check your circulation and motion. Tell the nurse if you feel any changes in either of these areas. A surgical dressing and an elastic bandage will cover the incision(s).

If you are in pain, ask the nurse for medication. S/he will make you as comfortable as possible.

When you are fully awake and stable, you can go home. Someone **must** drive you home, as discussed during your preoperative appointment. The medicine you received during the arthroscopy can make you sleepy. It is not safe to drive for the first 24 to 36 hours after an operation.

Home Care

Use pillows to raise the knee that was operated on, higher than your heart.

Put ice on your knee for 20 minutes, 5 times a day, if told to do so by your doctor. You should rest several times the day of your surgery. Ice and raise your knee during your rest times. Increase your activity slowly. The day after surgery, you should be nearly back to normal. Follow the instructions that your doctor and nurse gave you. Take pain medication as ordered. **Do not drive** while you are taking pain medication. It can make you sleepy.

Do the exercises your doctor told you to do. Be careful not to over-do.

You may remove the dressing after 2 or 3 days or when your surgeon told you to. You may cover the incision(s) with Band-Aids or leave them open to the air.

You may shower after you remove the dressing or when your surgeon says you can. After bathing or showering, pat the incision(s) dry, do not rub or scrub them.

Check your knee every day for signs of infection:

- Redness along the incision(s), some pinkness and a small amount of bloody drainage are normal after surgery
- Increased swelling, tenderness, or puffiness
- Yellowish, greenish, or foul smelling discharge
- Openings at the incision site(s)

Call your surgeon at (612) 467-1780, the Orthopaedic Clinic at (612) 467-3491, or the nurse coordinator at (612) 467-3843 if:

- Your temperature is above 101° for 24 hours
- Your temperature suddenly jumps to 102° or higher
- You see any of the signs of infection listed above
- You have any questions or problems

If there is no answer when you call the numbers given above or if your call is not returned after 8 hours, call Urgent Care at (612) 467-2771.

Before you leave Outpatient Surgery, be sure you know when your first follow-up appointment is. If you are not told, **ask!**

Your postoperative appointment has been scheduled for _____ at _____ in Specialty Clinic 4 (2F) Orthopaedics.

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